

Oversight Division

Committee On Legislative Research

SUNSET REVIEW

AFTER SCHOOL RETREAT READING
AND ASSESSMENT CHECK OFF BOX

Sunset Review

AFTER SCHOOL RETREAT READING AND ASSESSMENT CHECK OFF BOX

*Prepared for the Committee on Legislative Research
by the Oversight Division*

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Committee on Legislative Research Oversight Subcommittee

THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH, Oversight Division, is an agency of the Missouri General Assembly as established in Chapter 23 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri. The programs and activities of the State of Missouri cost approximately \$24.0 billion annually. Each year the General Assembly enacts laws which add to, delete or change these programs. To meet the demands for more responsive and cost effective state government, legislators need to receive information regarding the status of the programs which they have created and the expenditure of funds which they have authorized. The work of the Oversight Division provides the General Assembly with a means to evaluate state agencies and state programs.

THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH is a permanent joint committee of the Missouri General Assembly comprised of the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and nine other members of the Senate and the chairman of the House Budget Committee and nine other members of the House of Representatives. The Senate members are appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and the House members are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. No more than six members from the House and six members from the Senate may be of the same political party.

Sunset reviews are assigned to the Oversight Division pursuant to Sections 23.250 to 23.298. After August 28, 2003, any new program authorized by the General Assembly shall sunset not more than six years after its effective date unless reauthorized by the General Assembly. The Oversight Division shall conduct a performance evaluation of the program as set forth in statute and prepare a written report. The report shall make recommendations on the sunset, continuation, or reorganization of a program,

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**COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
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Members of the General Assembly:

The Joint Committee on Legislative Research is required by Section 23.259.1(3), RSMo to conduct performance evaluations of sunset programs to determine and evaluate program performance in accordance with program objectives, responsibilities, and duties as set forth by statute or regulation. The Oversight Division has reviewed the following programs:

- Surviving Spouse Tax Credit;
- Film Production Tax Credit;
- New Markets Tax Credit;
- After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Check Off;
- Missouri Teaching Fellows; and
- Healthcare Access Fund Tax Credit

The approved reports include Oversight's comments on (1) the sunset, continuation, or reorganization of the program, and on the need for the performance of the functions of the program; (2) the duplication of program functions; (3) the appropriation levels for each program for which sunset or reorganization is recommended; and possibly (4) drafts of legislation necessary to carry out the committee's recommendations pursuant to (1) and (2) above.

We hope this information is helpful and can be used in a constructive manner for the betterment of the state program to which it relates. You may obtain a copy of the reports from the Oversight Division website at <http://www.moga.mo.gov/htmlpages/losunsetreview.html>.

Respectfully,


Senator Brad Lager
Chairman

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Extended Learning Unit administers the After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program which awards grants to schools on a competitive grant basis. School districts can develop after-school reading and assessment programs and submit proposals to DESE, pursuant to criteria established by DESE for grant approval and on forms promulgated by DESE for grant applications. The program calls for the development of programs which are educational in nature, with emphasis in reading and student assessment thereof as opposed to day-care oriented programs.

In each taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2008, each individual or corporation entitled to a tax refund in an amount sufficient to make a designation may designate that one dollar or any amount in excess of one dollar on a single return, and two dollars or any amount in excess of two dollars on a combined return, of the refund due be credited to the After-school Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program Fund. A taxpayer may also donate to the fund by sending a separate check with the payment of his or her taxes. The Department of Revenue shall deposit at least monthly all contributions designated by individuals under this section to the program fund.

DESE has established a competitive grant process to award 100% of the funds collected under this program. In accordance with the statute to give preference to school districts with a higher percentage of at-risk students, only districts with a free and reduced lunch population at 40% or higher are eligible to apply for the grant.

The provisions regarding this program will expire August 28, 2013.

Oversight notes the After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program is in place and requires little resources to administer the program. The program appears to provide measurable reading incentives and improved reading scores. Since the program is a income tax check off program and requires no state funding, Oversight recommends the program be extended an additional six years to August, 2019.

Chapter 1

Purpose/Objectives

The General Assembly has provided by law that the Joint Committee on Legislative Research will conduct a performance evaluation of a program subject to the Missouri Sunset Act. The committee shall consider the criteria as listed in Section 23.268, RSMo in determining whether a public need exists for the continuation of a program, or for the performance of the functions of the program. A sunset review is the regular assessment of the continuing need for a state program to exist. A sunset review answers the basic questions of what has happened to this program since its inception and does the State of Missouri continue to “need” the services provided by the program.

The Joint Committee on Legislative Research directed the Oversight Division to conduct a Sunset Review of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program (Section 143.1008, RSMo). This report provides a status on the After-School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program as created by Senate Substitute No. 2 for Senate Committee Substitute for House Committee Substitute for House Bill Nos. 444, 217, 225, 239, 243, 297, 402 and 172 in the 2007 legislative session and fulfills the requirement as established by Section 23.268, RSMo.

The Oversight Division review addressed, but was not limited to the following:

1. Compiling and reviewing data related to the program since its inception.
2. Analyzing related events and changes to the program since its inception in 2007.

Scope

The Oversight Division researched the laws and activity regarding the After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program from 1998 through 2011. Analysis included a review of Department of Revenue and Department of Elementary Education data related to the program.

Methodology

The Oversight Division obtained information on the After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program through correspondence, interviews, and a review of a sample of project files of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as well as review of statutes related to the program.

Background

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Extended Learning Unit administers the After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program, pursuant to Section 167.680, RSMo. The program was enacted by Senate Bill 319 in 2001. Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, the program was to award grants to schools on a competitive grant basis. School districts can develop after-school reading and assessment programs and submit proposals to DESE, pursuant to criteria established by DESE for grant approval and on forms promulgated by DESE for grant applications. The program calls for the development of programs which are educational in nature, with emphasis in reading and student assessment thereof as opposed to day-care oriented programs. The program was subject to appropriation.

House Bill 444 et al (2007) stated in Section 143.1008 that in each taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2008, each individual or corporation entitled to a tax refund in an amount sufficient to make a designation may designate that one dollar or any amount in excess of one dollar on a single return, and two dollars or any amount in excess of two dollars on a combined return, of the refund due be credited to the After-school Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program Fund. A taxpayer may also donate to the fund by sending a separate check with the payment of his or her taxes. The Department of Revenue shall deposit at least monthly all contributions designated by individuals under this section to the program fund.

DESE has established a competitive grant process to award 100% of the funds collected under this program. In accordance with the statute to give preference to school districts with a higher percentage of at-risk students, only districts with a free and reduced lunch population at 40% or higher are eligible to apply for the grant.

The provisions regarding this section will expire six years from the effective date of August 28, 2007.

The Program

Individual and corporate taxpayers may donate all or part of any overpaid tax amount or may make a separate donation to the After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program Fund.

The Department of Revenue deposits monthly all contributions designated by individuals and corporations to the State Treasury for credit in the After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program Fund. The dollar amount contributed to this fund from FY 09 to FY 12 (through April 28, 2012) is as follows:

YEAR	VOLUME	AMOUNT
FY 09	1,200	\$10,270.29
FY 10	1,161	\$11,742.81
FY 11	987	\$10,557.27
FY 12	912	\$ 8,641.59
TOTAL	3,853	\$41,211.96

The Department of Revenue did not request or receive any FTE to administer this fund.

Over the past three years, DESE has awarded 21 grants to eligible school districts totaling approximately \$35,000. There have been a total of 64 applications since the program has been implemented. Since this program funding is generated yearly from tax designations and/or contributions, the funds collected can vary greatly from year to year. DESE will only run a competitive grant cycle once collections for that period total at least \$8,000 (the equivalent of four grant recipients).

Grant applications are evaluated and scored, with the highest scores receiving the available grant funds.

If awarded a grant, recipient schools must submit a final program report listing results of several measurable objectives as well as the use of funds. FY 2010-11 aggregated data showed that the program served 464 students and 76% of these students indicated an increase in reading scores and 70% showed an increase in reading interest.

DESE indicated very few resources are required to administer this program. Duties are included within the scope of a current position and staff indicated no more than two days a year are spent on oversight of the program.

No rules or regulations have been promulgated for this program.

Marketing

The After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grand Program Fund check off box is on the Missouri Individual Income Tax Return and the Corporate Income Tax Return. The Department of Revenue provides instructional information in tax booklets for individual and corporations that wish to contribute to this fund.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides announcements for the reading grant by way of the following:

- DESE Website Homepage
- DESE Mailbag
- Extended Learning Website
- Missouri School Age Coalition (MOSAC2)
- All current and past 21st Community Learning Center (CCLC) Grants
- All current/past School Age Community (SAC) Grants
- Current and past Service Learning Grants
- Conferences (MAACCE, MOSAC2, Grantee Workshop)
- DESE Portal for Afterschool Programs

Chapter 2

Comments

As part of our sunset review of the program, Oversight chose a sampling of five grants to study in more detail. Oversight reviewed the grant application, evaluations of grant applications, and final reports from grant recipients. The five grants selected by Oversight were:

University City School District (2009-2010)
Green City R-1 (2009-2010)
Maplewood-Richmond Heights (2010-2011)
Brounaugh R-7 (2011-2012)
Northwest Vernon County R-1 (2011-2012)

All files were found to be complete and in order. Enhancements have been made to the grant process in the areas of grant application and final reporting.

The Department of Revenue has not recommended any statutory changes, recommendations, or suggestions to this program. The Department of Revenue will continue to administer the program if the program is reauthorized.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not have any suggestions or recommendations regarding this program, but is requesting to keep the program.

Program Continuation

Possible options available to the Missouri General Assembly include letting the program expire or extending the sunset of the program:

1. First, the General Assembly could allow the program to sunset in August, 2013 by taking no further action regarding this program.
2. Second, the General Assembly can extend the sunset up to an additional twelve years (approximately until August, 2025).
3. Third, the General Assembly could extend the program for a period of time less than the stated twelve years.

Recommendations

Oversight notes the After School Retreat Reading and Assessment Grant Program is in place and requires little resources to administer the program. The program appears to provide measurable reading incentives and improved reading scores. Since the program is a income tax check off program and requires no state funding, Oversight recommends the program be extended an additional six years to August, 2019.